AN APOLOGY FOR THE Church of England,

With relation to the Spirit of PERSECUTION:

For which She is Accuſed.

I. ONE ſhould think, that the Behaviour of the *Engliſh Clergy* for ſome years paſt, and the preſent Circumſtances in which they are, ſhould ſet them beyond *Slander*, and by conſequence above *Apologies*; yet ſince the Malice of her Enemies work againſt her with ſo much *Spight*, and ſince there is no inſinuation that carries ſo much Malice in it, and that ſeems to have ſuch colours of Truth on it, as this of their having ſet on a ſevere *Perſecution* againſt the *Diſſenters*, of being ſtill ſowr'd with that Leven, and of carrying the ſame implacable hatred to them, which the preſent Reputation that they have gained, may put them in a further capacity of executing, if another revolution of Affairs ſhould again give them Authority to ſet about it; it ſeems neceſſary to examine it, and that the rather, becauſe ſome aggravate this ſo far, as if nothing were now to be ſo much dreaded as the *Church* of *England*'s getting out of her preſent diſtreſs.

II. If theſe Imputations were charged on us only by thoſe of the *Church of Rome*, we ſhould not much wonder at it, for tho it argues a good degree of Confidence, for any of that Communion to declaim againſt the Severities that have been put in practice among us, ſince their *little finger muſt be heavier than ever our loins* were, and to whoſe *Scorpions* our *Rods* ought not to be compared; yet after all, we are ſo much accuſtomed to their methods, that nothing from them can ſurpriſe us. To hear *Papiſts* declare againſt *Perſecution*, and *Jeſuits* cry up *Liberty of Conſcience*, are, we confeſs, unuſual things: yet there are ſome degrees of ſhame, over which when people are once paſſed, all things become ſo familiar to them, that they can no more be put out of countenance. But it ſeems very ſtrange to us, that *ſome*, who if they are to be believed, are ſtrict to the ſevereſt forms and ſub-diviſions of the *Reformed Religion*, and that who ſome years ago were jealous of the ſmalleſt ſteps that the *Court* made, when the danger was more remote; and who cried out *Popery* and *Perſecution*, when the Deſign was ſo maſkt that ſome

well-meaning men could not miss being deceived by the Promises that were made, and the Disguises that were put on; that, I say, these very persons who were formerly so distrustful, should now when the Mask is laid off, and the Design is avowed, of a sudden grow to be so *believing*, as to throw off all distrust, and be so gulled as to betray all; and expose us to the Rage of those, who must needs give some good words, till they have gone the round, and tried how effectually they can divide and deceive us, that so they may destroy us the more easily; this is indeed somewhat extraordinary. They are not so ignorant as not to know, that *Popery* cannot change its *nature*, and that *Cruelty and Breach of Faith to Hereticks*, are as necessary parts of that Religion, as *Transubstantiation and the Popes Supremacy* are. If *Papists* were not Fools, they must give good Words and fair Promises, till by these they have so far deluded the poor credulous Hereticks, that they may put themselves in a posture to execute the Decrees of their Church against them: and tho we accuse that Religion as guilty both of *Cruelty* and *Treachery*, yet we do not think 'em *Fools*: so till their *party* is stronger than God be thanked it is at present, *they* can take no other method than that they take. The *Church of England* was the *Word* among them some years ago, *Liberty of Conscience* is the *Word* at present; and we have all possible reason to assure us, that the promises for maintaining the one, will be as religiously kept as we see those are which were lately made with so great profusion of Protestations, and shews of Friendship for the supporting of the other.

III. It were great Injustice to charge all the *Dissenters* with the Impertinencies that have appeared in many *Addresses* of late, or to take our measures of them, from the Impudent strains of an *Alsop* or a *Care*, or from the more Important and now more visible steps that some among them, of a higher form, are every day making; and yet after all this, it cannot be denied but the several bodies of the *Dissenters* have behaved themselves of late like men that understand too well the true Interest of the *Protestant Religion*, and of the *English Government*, to sacrifice the whole and themselves in Conclusion to their private resentments: I hope the same justice will be allowed me in stating the matter relating to the so much decried *Persecution*, set on by the *Ch. of Eng.* and that I may be suffered to distinguish the heats of some angry and deluded men, from the Doctrine of the Church, and the practices that have been authorised in it; that so I may shew, that there is no reason to infer from past Errors, that we are incurable; or that new Opportunities inviting us again into the same severities, are like to prevail over us to commit the same follies over again. I will first state what is past, with the sincerity that becomes one that would not *lye for God*; that is, not afraid nor ashamed to confess faults, that will neither agrravate nor extenuate them beyond what is just, and that yet will avoid the saying any thing that may give any cause of offence to any *party* in the Nation.

IV. I am sorry that I must confess, that all the parties among us, have shewed, that as their turn came to be uppermost, they have forgot the same Principles of Moderation and Liberty which they all claimed when they were oppressed. If it should shew too much ill nature to examine what the *Presbytery* did in *Scotland* when the *Covenant* was in Dominion, or what the *Indepedents* have done in *New-England*; why may not I claim the same priviledge with relation to the *Church of England*, if severities have been committed by her while she bore rule? Yet it were as easie as it would be invidious to shew, that both *Presbyterians* and *Independents* have carried the principle of Rigour in the point of Conscience much higher, and have acted more implacably upon it than ever the *Church of England* has done, even in its angriest fits; so that none of them can much reproach another for their excesses in those matters. And as of all the *Religions* in the world the *Church of Rome* the most *persecuting*, and the most bound by her Principles to be unalterably Cruel; so the *Church of England* is the least persecuting in her principles, and the least obliged to repeat any errors to which

which the intrigues of Courts or the paſſions incident to all parties may have engaged her, of any National *Church* in *Europe*. It cannot be ſaid to be any part of our Doctrine, when we came out of one of the blackeſt *perſecutions* that is in Hiſtory, I mean Q. *Maryes*, we ſhewed how little we retained of the Cruelty of that Church, which had provoked us ſo ſeverely; when not only no Enquiries were made into the illegal acts of Fury, that were committed in that perſecuting Reign, but even the Perſecutors themſelves lived among us at eaſe and in peace; and no *Penal Law* was made except againſt publick exerciſe of that Religion, till a great many Rebelions and Treaſons extorted them from us for our own preſervation. This is an Inſtance of the Clemency of our Church, that perhaps cannot be matched in Hiſtory: and why ſhould it not be ſuppoſed, that if God ſhould again put us in the ſtate in which we were of late, that we ſhould rather imitate ſo Noble a pattern, than return to thoſe *miſtakes* of which we are now *aſhamed*?

V. It is to be conſidered, that upon the late Kings Reſtauration, the remembrance of the former *War*, the ill Uſage that our Clergy had met with in their *Sequeſtrations*, the angry Reſentments of the *Cavalier-party*, who were ruined by the *War*, the *Intereſt* of the Court to have all thoſe principles condemned, that had occaſioned it, the heat that all Parties that have been ill uſed are apt to fall into upon a Revolution; but above all, the practices of thoſe who have ſtill blown the Coals, and ſet us one againſt another, that ſo they might not only have a divided force to deal with, but might by turns make the *Diviſins* among us ſerve their *Ends*: all theſe, I ſay, concurred to make us loſe the happy opportunity that was offer'd in the Year 1660. to have healed all our Diviſions, and to have triumphed over all the *Diſſenters*; not by ruining them, but by overcoming them with a ſpirit of *Love* and *Gentleneſs*; which is the only Victory that a generous and Chriſtian temper can deſire. In ſhort, unhappy *Councils* were followed, and ſeveral Laws were made. But after all, it was the *Court-party* that carried it for rougher methods: ſome conſiderble Accidents, not neceſſary to be here mentioned, as they ſtopped the mouths of ſome that had formed a wiſer Project, ſo they gave a fatal Advantage to angry and crafty men, that to our misfortune, had too great a ſtroak in the conduct of our Affairs at that time. This Spirit of Severity was heightned by the Practices of the Papiſts, who engaged the late *King* in *December*, 1662. to give a Declaration for *Liberty of Conſcience*. Thoſe who knew the ſecret of his Religion, as they ſaw that it aimed at the introduction to *Popery*, ſo they thought there was no way ſo effectual, for the keeping out of Popery, as the maintaining the *Uniformity*, and the ſuppreſſing of all deſigns for a *Toleration*. But while thoſe who managed this, uſed a due reſerve, in not diſcovering the ſecret motive that led them to it, and others flew into ſeverity, as the principle in vogue: and thus all the ſlacknings of the rigour of the Laws, during the firſt *Dutch* War, that were ſet on upon the pretence of quieting the Nation, and of encouraging Trade, were reſiſted by the Inſtruments of an honeſt *Miniſter of State*, who knew as well then, as we do now, what lay ſtill at bottom, when *Liberty of Conſcience* was pretended.

VI. Upon that Miniſters *Diſgrace*, ſome that ſaw but the half of the *Secret*, perceiving in the Court a great inclination to *Toleration*, and being willing to take meaſures quite different from thoſe of the former *Miniſtry*, they entred into a treaty for a *Comprehenſion of ſome Diſſenters, and the Tolerating of others*, and ſome *Biſhops* and *Clergymen*, that were inferiour to none of the Age in which they lived, for true Worth and a right Judgment of things, engaged ſo far, and with ſo much ſucceſs into this project, that the matter ſeemed done, all things being concerted among ſome of the moſt conſiderable men of the different Parties. But the diſlike of that *Miniſtry*, and the Jealouſie of the ill deſigns of the *Court*, gave ſo ſtrong a prejudice againſt this, that the propoſition could not be ſo much as hearkned unto by the Houſe of

Commons: and then it appeared how much the whole *Popish Party* was alarm'd at the Project: it is well known with how much Deteſtation they ſpeak of it to this day: tho we are now ſo fully ſatisfied of their Intentions to deſtroy us, that the zeal which they pretended for us, in oppoſing that deſign, can no more paſs upon us.

VII. At laſt, in the Year 1672. the deſign for *Popery* diſcovering it ſelf, the end that the *Court* had in favouring a *Toleration* became more viſible: and when the *Parliament* met, that condemned the *Declaration for Liberty of Conſcience*, the Members of the Houſe of *Commons*, that either were *Diſſenters*, or that favoured them, behaved themſelves ſo worthily in concurring with the *Church of England*, for ſtifling that *Toleration*, chooſing rather to loſe the benefit of it, than to open a breach at which *Popery* ſhould come in, that many of the *members* that were for the *Church of England*, promiſed to procure them a bill of *Eaſe for Proteſtant Diſſenters*. But the *Seſſion* was not long enough for bringing that to perfection; and all the Seſſions of that *Parliament* after that, were ſpent in ſuch a continual ſtruggle between the *Court* and *Country* Party, that there was never room given for calm and wiſe Conſultations: yet tho the Party of the *Church of England* did not perform what had been promiſed by ſome Leading men to the *Diſſenters*, there was little or nothing done againſt them, after that, till the Year 1681. ſo that for about nine years together they had their Meetings almoſt as publickly and as regularly as the *Church of England* had their Churches, and in all that time, whatſoever particular hardſhips any of them might have met with in ſome corners of *England*, it cannot be denied but they had the free Exerciſe of their Religion, at leaſt in moſt parts.

VIII. In the year 1678. things began to change their face: it is known, that upon the breaking out of the popiſh plot, the *Clergy* did Univerſally expreſs a great deſire for coming to ſome temper in the points of *Conformity*: all ſorts and ranks of the *Clergy* ſeemed to be ſo well diſpoſed towards it, that if it had met with a ſutable entertainment, matters might probably have been in a greater meaſure compoſed. But the Jealouſie that thoſe who managed the Civil concerns of the Nation in the *Houſe of Commons*, took off all that was done at *Court*, or propoſed by it, occaſioned a fatal breach in our publick Councils: in which diviſion the *Clergy* by their principles, and intereſts, and their diſpoſition to believe well of the *Court* were determined to be of the Kings ſide. They thought it was a ſin to miſtruſt the late King's *Word*, who aſſured them of his ſteadineſs to the *Proteſtant Religion* ſo often, that they firmly depended on it: and his preſent *Majeſty* gave them ſo many Aſſurances of his *maintaining* ſtill the *Church of England*, that they believed him likewiſe: and ſo thought that the Excluſion of him from the Crown, was a degree of rigour to which they in Conſcience could not conſent: upon which they were generally cried out on, as the Betrayers of the Nation, and of the *Proteſtant Religion*: Thoſe who demanded the *Excluſion*, and ſome other ſecurities, to which the *Biſhops* would not conſent in Parliament, looked on them as the chief hindrance that was in their way: and the Licenſe of the Preſs at that time was ſuch, that many Libels and ſome ſevere Diſcourſes were publiſhed againſt them. Nor can it be denied, that many *Churchmen*, who underſtood not the principles of Humane Society, and the rules of our Government, ſo well as other points of Divinity, writ ſeveral Treatiſes concerning the meaſures of ſubmiſſion, that were then as much cenſured, as their performances ſince againſt *Popery* have been deſervedly admired. All this gave ſuch a Jealouſie of them to the Nation, that it muſt be confeſſed, that the Spirit which was then in fermentation went very high againſt the *Church of England*, as a Confederate, at leaſt, to Popery and Tyranny. Nor were ſeveral of the *Nonconformiſts* wanting to inflame this diſlike; all ſecret propoſitions for accommodating our differences were ſo coldly entertained, that they

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were ſcarce hearkned unto. The Propoſitions which an Eminent *Divine* made even in his Books writ againſt *Separation*, ſhewed that while we maintained the War in the way of diſpute, yet we were ſtill willing to *Treat*: for this *Great Man* made not thoſe advances towards them without conſulting with his Superiours. Yet we were then fatally given up to a ſpirit of Diſſention: and tho the Parliament in 1680. entred upon a project for healing our differences, in which great ſteps were made to the removing of all the occaſions of our Conteſts; the *Leaders of the Diſſenters*, to the amazement of all perſons, made no account of this: and even ſeemed uneaſie at it, of which the Earl of *Nottingham* and Sir *Thomas Clarges*, that ſet on that Bill with much zeal, can give a more particular account: All theſe things concurred to make thoſe of the *Church of England* conclude, *a little too raſhly*, that their ruin was reſolved on; and then it was no wonder if the ſpirit of a Party, the remembrance of the *laſt War*, the preſent proſpect of *Danger*, and above all, the great favour that was ſhewed them at *Court*, threw them *fatally* into ſome angry and Violent Counſels; ſelf-preſervation is very natural: and it is plain, that many of them took that to be the Caſe, ſo that truly ſpaeking, it was not ſo much at firſt a ſpirit of Perſecution, as a deſire of diſabling thoſe who they believed intended to ruin them from effecting their deſigns, that ſet them on to all thoſe *unhappy* things that followed. They were animated to all they did by the *continued* earneſtneſs of the *King* and *Duke*, and of their *Miniſters*. That Reproach of *Juſtice*, and of the profeſſion of the *Law*, who is now ſo *high*, was ſingled out for no other end, but to be their *Common Hangman* over *England*; of whom the late *King* gave this true character, *That he had neither Wit, Law, nor Common Senſe; but that he had the Impudence of ten carted Whores in him.* Another *Buffoon*, was hired to plague the Nation with three or four Papers a week, which to the Reproach of the Age in which we live, had but too great and too general an effect, for poyſoning the ſpirits of the *Clergy*. But thoſe who knew how all this was managed, ſaw that it was not only ſet on, but ſtill kept up by the *Court*. If any of the *Clergy had* but preached a word for moderation, he had a chiding ſent him preſently from the Court, and he was from that day marked out as a *diſaffected perſon*: and when the *Clergy of London* did very worthily refuſe to give Informations againſt their Pariſhioners that had not always Conformed, the deſign having been form'd, upon that to bring them into the *Spiritual Courts*, and Excommunicate them, and make them loſe their right of *Voting*, that ſo the *Charter of London* might have been delivered up when ſo many *Citizens* were by ſuch means ſhut out of the *Common-Council*; we remember well how ſeverely they were Cenſured for this, by ſome that are now dead, and others that are yet alive. I will not go further into this matter: I will not deny but many of the *Diſſenters* were put to great hardſhips, in many parts of *England*. I cannot deny it, and I am ſure I will never juſtifie it. But this I will poſitively ſay, having obſerved it all narrowly, that he muſt have the brow of a *Jeſuite*, that can caſt this wholly on the *Church of England*, and free the *Court* of it. The beginnings and the progreſs of it came from the *Court*, and from the *Popiſh party*: and tho perhaps every one does not know all the ſecrets of this matter, that others may have found out, yet no man was ſo ignorant as not to ſee what was the chief ſpring of all thoſe Irregular motions that ſome of us made at that time: ſo upon the whole matter, all that can be made out of this, is, that the paſſions and infirmities of ſome of the *Church of England*, being unhappily ſtirred up by the *Diſſenters*, they were fatally conducted by the *Popiſh party*, to be the Inſtruments in doing a great deal of miſchief.

IX. It is not to be doubted, but though ſome weaker men of the *Clergy* may perhaps ſtill retain their little peeviſh animoſities againſt the *Diſſenters*, yet the wiſer and more ſerious heads of that great and *Worthy Body*, ſee now their Error: they ſee

who drove them on in it, till they hoped to have ruined them by it. And as they have appeared againſt *Popery*, with as great a ſtrength of Learing, annd of firm ſteadineſs as perhaps can be met with in all Church-hiſtory, ſo it cannot be doubted, but their reflections on the dangers into which our Diviſions have thrown us, have given them truer Notions with relation to a rigorous *Conformity*: and that the juſt Deteſtation which they have expreſſed of the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome* has led them to conſider and abhor one of the worſt things in it, I mean their *Severity* towards *Hereticks*. And the ill uſe that they ſee the *Court* has made of their Zeal for ſupporting the Crown, to juſtifie the ſubverſion of our Government that is now ſet on from ſome of their large and unwary expreſſions, will certainly make them hereafter more cautious in medling with *Politicks*: the *Biſhops* have undor their hands both diſowned that wide extent of the *Prerogative*, to the overturning of the *Law*, and declared their diſpoſition to come to a *Temper* in the matters of *Conformity*; and there ſeems to be no doubt left of the ſincerity of their Intentions in that matter. Their Piety and Vertue, and the proſpect that they now have of ſuffering themſelves, put us beyond all doubt as to their ſincerity, and if ever God in his Providence brings us again into a ſetled State, out of the ſtorm into which our paſſions and folly, as well as the Treachery of others has brought us, it cannot be imagined, that the *Biſhops* will go off from thoſe moderate Reſolutions, which they have now declared: and they continuing firm to them, the weak and indiſcreet paſſions of any of the inferiour *Clergy*, muſt needs vaniſh, when they are under the conduct of wiſe and worthy Leaders. And I will boldly ſay this, that if the *Church of England*, after ſhe has got out of this Storm, will return to hearken to the peeviſhneſs of ſome *four* men, ſhe will be abandoned both of *God* and *man*, and will ſet both Heaven and Earth againſt her The Nation ſees too Viſibly, how dear the Diſpute about *Conformity* has coſt us, to ſtand any more upon ſuch *Punctilio's*: and THOSE *in whom our Deliverance is wrapt up*, underſtand this matter too well, and judge too right of it, to imagin that ever they will be *Prieſtridden* in this point. So that all conſiderations concur to make us conclude, that there is no danger of our ſplitting a ſecond time upon the ſame Rock; and indeed, if any Argument were wanting to compleat the certainty of this point, tha Wiſe and Generous behaviour of the main body of the *Diſſenters*, in this preſent Juncture, has given them ſo juſt a Title to our Friendſhip, that we muſt reſolve to ſet all the World againſt us, if we can ever forget it; and if we do not make them all the returns of Eaſe and Favour, when it is in our power to do it.

X. It is to be hoped, that when this is laid together, it will have that effect on all Sober and True Proteſtants, as to make them forget the little angry Heats that have been among us, and even to forget the injuries that have been done us: all that we do now one againſt another, is to ſhorten the work of our Enemies, by deſtroying one another, which muſt in Concluſion turn to all our *Ruin*. It is a madmans Revenge to deſtroy our Friends that we may do a pleaſure to our Enemies, upon their giving us ſome good words; and if the *Diſſenters* can truſt to Papiſts, after the uſage that the Church of *England* has met with at their hands, all the comfort that they can promiſe themſelves, when Popery begins to act its natural part among us, and to ſet *Smithfield* again in a Fire, is that which befel ſome *Quakers* at *Rome*, who were firſt put into the *Inquiſition*, but were afterwards removed to *Bedlam*: ſo tho thoſe falſe Brethren among the *Diſſenters*, who deceive them at preſent, are certainly no *Changlings*, but know vvell vvhat they are doing; yet thoſe vvho can be chated by them, may vvell claim the priviledge of a *Bedlam*, vvhen their Folly has left them no other retreat.

XI. I vvill not digreſs too far from my preſent purpoſe; nor enter into a diſcuſſion of the *Diſpenſing power*, vvhich vvas ſo effectually overthrown the other day at the

Kings-

Kings-Bench-Bar, that I am ſure all the Authority of the *Bench* it ſelf is no more able to Support it: yet ſome late *Papers* in favour of it, give me occaſion to add a little relating to that point. It is true, the Aſſertor of the *Diſpenſing power*, who has lately appeared *with allowance*, pretends, that it can only be applyed to the *Teſt* for publick Employments: for he owns, that the *Teſt* for both Houſes of Parliament is left entire, as not within the compaſs of this extent of the Prerogative: but another Writer, whom by his ſenſe we muſt conclude an *Iriſh man*, by his brow a *Jeſuit*, and by the bare deſignation in the Title page, of *James Stewarts letter*, a *Quaker*, goes a ſtrain higher, and thinks the King is ſo abſolutely the Soveraign as to the Legiſlative part of our Government, that he may diſſolve even the *Parliament Teſt*: ſo nimbly has he leapt from being a *Secretary to a Rebellion*, to be an *Advocate for Tyranny*. He fancies, that becauſe no *Parliament* can bind up another, therefore they cannot limit the *Preliminaries* to a ſubſequent Parliament. But upon what is it then, that Counties have but two Knights, and Burroughs as many: that men below ſuch a value have no Vote, that *Sheriffs* only receive Writs and return Elections, beſides many more neceſſary requiſites to the making a legal Parliament. In ſhort, if Laws do not regulate the Election and Conſtitution of a Parliament, all theſe things may be overthrown, and the *King* may caſt the whole Government in a new Mould, as well as diſſolve the obligation that is on the *Members* of Parliament for taking the *Teſt*. It is true, that as ſoon as a Parliament is legally met and conſtituted, it is tyed by no Laws, ſo far as not to repeal them: but the *Preliminaries* to a *Parliament* are ſtill ſacred, as long as the Law ſtands that ſetled them: for the *Members* are ſtill in the quality of ordinary Subjects, and not entred upon their ſhare in the Legiſlative power, till they are conſtituted in a *Parliament* Legally choſen and Lawfully aſſembled, that is, *having obſerved all the Requiſites of the Law*. But I leave that impudent *Letter* to return to the moſt Apology that has been yet writ for the *Diſpenſing power*. It yields that the King cannot *abrogate* Laws, and pretends only that he can diſpenſe with them: and the diſtinction it puts between *abrogation* and *Diſpenſation*, is, that the one is a total repeal of the Law, and that the other is only a ſlackning of its obligatory force, with Relation to a particular man or to any body of men; ſo that according to him, a ſimple *Abrogation*, or a *total Repeal*, is beyond the compaſs of the Prerogative. I deſire then that this Doctrine may be applyed to the following words of the *Declaration*; from which the *Reader* may infer whether theſe do import a *Simple Abrogation*, or not, and by conſequence, if the Declaration is not illegal; *We do hereby further Declare, That it is our* Royal will *and* pleaſure *that the Oaths commonly called the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegeance, and alſo the ſeveral Teſts and Declarations---- ſhall not* at any time hereafter, *be required to be taken, Declared, or ſubſcribed by* any perſon or perſons whatſoever, *who is or ſhall be Imployed in any Office or Place of Truſt, either Civil or Military, under us or in our Government*. This is plain *Engliſh*, and needs no Commentary. That paper offers likewiſe an Expedient for ſecuring *Liberty of Conſcience*, by which it will be ſet beyond even the *Diſpenſing power*; and that is, that by Act of Parliament all *Perſecution* may be declared to be a thing *evil in it ſelf*, and then the Prerogative cannot reach it. But unleſs this Author fancies, that a Parliament is that which thoſe of the Church of *Rome* believe a *General Council* to be, I mean *Infallible*, I do not ſee that ſuch an Act would ſignify any thing at all. An Act of Parliament cannot change the nature of things which are ſullen, and will not alter, becauſe a hard word is clapt on them in an Act of Parliament; nor can that make that which is not *evil of it ſelf* become *evil of it ſelf*: for can any Act of Parliament make the *Clipping of Money*, or the not *Burying in Woollen evil of it ſelf*? Such an Act were indeed *null of it ſelf*, and would ſink with its own weight, even without the burden of the Prerogative to preſs it down: and yet

upon ſuch a ſandy foundation would theſe men have us build all our Hopes and our Securities. Another topick like this, is, that we ought to truſt to the truth of our *Religion*, and the providence and protection of God, and not to lean ſo much to *Laws* and *Teſts*. All this were very pertinent, if God had not already given us humane Aſſurances againſt the Rage of our Enemies, which we are now deſired to abandon, that ſo we may fall an eaſie and cheap *Sacrifice* to thoſe who wait for the favourable moment to *deſtroy* us: by the ſame reaſon they may perſwade us to take off all our *Doors*, or at leaſt all our *Locks* and *Bolts*, and to ſleep in this expoſed condition, truſting to Gods *Protection*: The ſimily may appear a little too high, tho it is really ſhort of the matter; for we had better truſt our ſelves to all the Thieves and Robbers of the town, who would be perhaps contented with a part of our Goods, than to thoſe whoſe deſigns are equally againſt both Soul and Body, and all that is dear to us.

XII. I will only add another Reflexion upon the renewing of the *Declaration* this year, which has occaſioned the preſent ſtorm upon the *Clergy*. It is repeated to us that ſo we may ſee that the *King* continues firm to the Promiſes he made laſt year. Yet when Men of Honour have once given their *word*, they take it ill if any do not truſt to that, but muſt needs have it repeated to them: in the ordinary commerce of the world, the repeating of promiſes over and over again, is rather a ground of *Suſpition* than of *Confidence*, and if we judge of the accompliſhment of all the other parts of the *Declaration*, from that one, which relates to the maintaining of the Church of England, *as by Law eſtabliſhed*, the proceedings againſt the *Fellows of Magdalen Colledge*, gives us no reaſon to conclude, that this will be like *the Laws of the Medes and Perſians, which alter not*: all the talk of the New *Magna Charta* cannot lay us aſleep, when we ſee ſo little regard had to the *Old one*. As for the ſecurity which is offered us in this repeating of the *Kings* promiſes, we muſt crave leave to remember, that the *King of France*, even after he had reſolved to break the *Edict of Nantes*, yet repeated in above an hundred *Edicts*, that were real and viſible violations of that *Edict*, a clauſe confirmatory of the *Edict of Nantes*, declaring that he would never *Violate* it: and in that we may ſee what account is to be had of all *promiſes* made to *Heretick*s, in matters of Religion, by any Prince of the Roman Communion, but more particularly by a *Prince* who has put the conduct of his *Conſcience* in the hands of a *Jeſuite*.

FINIS.